

REMARKS

Claims 4, 5 and 11 are now pending in the application. Claims 12-18 are cancelled herein. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Applicant acknowledges with thanks the clarification of this matter.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 12-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fukano (JP Pat. No. 63-141750) in view of Billet (U.S. Pat. No. 6,010,205). This rejection is respectfully traversed. Notwithstanding and solely in the interest of expediting prosecution, Applicant cancels Claims 12-18. Accordingly, this rejection is moot.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicant acknowledges with thanks the allowance of Claims 4, 5 and 11.

COMMENTS ON STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

Reasons for allowance are only warranted in instances in which "the record of the prosecution as a whole does not make clear the [Examiner's] reasons for allowing a claim or claims." 37 C.F.R. 1.104 (e). In the present case, Applicant believes the record as a whole makes clear the reasons for allowance and therefore no statement by the

Examiner is necessary or warranted, especially since the statement may unfairly focus on certain reasons for allowance which are not reflected by the prosecution history. Therefore, the record should reflect that Applicant does not necessarily agree with each statement in the reasons for allowance. For example, while Applicant believes the claims are allowable, Applicant may not unequivocally agree that patentability resides solely in the specific feature or combination of features identified, or that each feature or combination of features identified is required for patentability, or that equivalents of any of the recited features are outside the scope of the claims. Moreover, to the extent the reasons for allowance do not separately address the subject matter of all the claims, Applicant does not acquiesce to any inference that the non-addressed claims fail to present other reasons for patentability apart from the patentability of the claims which were specifically addressed by the Examiner.

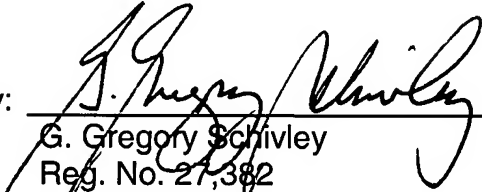
CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: 
G. Gregory Schivley
Reg. No. 27,382
Bryant E. Wade
Reg. No. 40,344

HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.
P.O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600

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